



Others Caring For Your Child

Photos/Notes Page

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There will be times when you decide to ask other people to take care of your child. **Never leave your young child alone.** Sometimes, you may ask a trusted friend or relative to stay with him while you go out. At other times, you may choose to hire someone. You may also place your child in care outside the home. Here are some things to consider when asking someone to care for your child.

Choosing a Babysitter

It is important to choose someone who is mature and old enough to understand what you expect. Spend some time with the babysitter, to see if you and your child feel comfortable with her. Watch how she cares for and responds to your child. Ask about her babysitting experience, training, and for the names and phone numbers of people you can call for references.

- Give the babysitter a list of instructions, emergency telephone numbers, and the telephone numbers where you can be reached.
- Make sure the babysitter knows how to prepare pumped breastmilk or formula.
- Ask the sitter not to smoke and to keep your child away from places where there is smoking.

You may be eligible for financial assistance for child care. For more information about this Department of Transitional Assistance program, call your DTA office or the Child Care Resource and Referral Network at 1-800-345-0131. If you leave your child in someone else's home, make sure the home is safe. See page 75 about childproofing.

Choosing Out-of-Home Child Care

Many parents put their children in child care so they can work or go to school. **Choose a program that has been licensed by the state Office of Child Care Services (OCCS).** These programs are legal, meet certain standards, and are monitored. You can call OCCS at 617-988-6600 for a report of proven complaints against a provider.

The Child Care Resource and Referral Network can tell you which providers have openings and about programs to help pay for child care. Call 1-800-345-0131.

Children can be cared for in two kinds of licensed programs: **family day care and child care centers.** Family day care is provided in someone's home. The groups of children in child care centers are larger, but may be closer in age than in family day care.

Before you choose a program, spend some time there. See if you and your child feel comfortable. Talk to parents of other children that use or have used the program. Their experiences can help you make this important decision. Only choose someone you trust.

Leaving your child at any age may be hard for all of you. It takes time for everyone to adjust. Caregivers are trained professionals. They are there to help you and your child. If, at any time, you are concerned—**visit** the program and **talk** to the caregiver. A good program will always let you in to see what is going on.

Choosing Child Care Checklist

- ☐ Do the children seem happy?
- ☐ Are the space, equipment, and materials clean and safe?
- ☐ Are there enough materials and equipment? Are they right for your child?
- ☐ What kinds of training and experience do the adults have?
- ☐ Does the staff work well together? How does the morning staff communicate with the afternoon staff?
- ☐ How will staff help your child begin the program?
- ☐ What is the discipline policy? Does it fit with yours?
- ☐ Look for pictures, books, puzzles, and games that show family and cultural differences.

- ☐ How are sick children cared for? How are the other children and staff protected?
- ☐ Will the program meet the special needs of your child and your family?
- ☐ How can parents be involved? Are there advisory committees, workshops, support groups, or social events?
- ☐ Is the program accredited? This means that the program is better than minimum standards require.
- ☐ Are there enough adults to take care of the children?

In **family day care**, there should be at least one adult for 6 children. If there are 7-10 children, there should be at least 2 adults.

In a **child care center**, there should be at least 2 adults for 7 infants or 9 toddlers (15 months - 32 months) or 1 adult for 10 preschoolers (33 months - 6 years).

When looking for care for an infant or toddler, ask:

- Can you breastfeed there? Will you be able to bring pumped breastmilk?
- Are infants always held when bottlefed?
- Are children kept in cribs and high chairs for long periods of time?
- Is the program flexible or will your child be required to fit into a group schedule?